REMARKS

Independent Claim 1, as amended, is to an electrical connector having a first connector housing and a second connector housing mating with the first connector housing. A tapered surface is integrally formed on each of the first and second connector housings, the tapered surfaces inclined in the mating direction of the first and second connector housings, the tapered surfaces engaging with each other on complete mating of the first and second connector housings. Independent Claim 3, as amended, is to an electrical connector similar to Claim 1 where a tapered surface is integrally formed on one of the first and second connector housings and the tapered surface is engaged with a surface of the other connector housing on mating of the first and second housings. Such electrical connectors are not taught or suggested in the prior art.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-9 are rejected as anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) by Fukuda (2003/007793). Reconsideration and removal of this rejection are respectfully requested in view of the present amendments and the following remarks.

In the Office Action, it is alleged that Fukuda shows an electrical connector that has a first connector housing 2 and a second connector housing 3 mating with the first connector housing, where a tapered surface 2b, 3b is provided in each of the first and second connector housings, the tapered surfaces inclined in the mating direction of the first and second connector housings and engaging with each other on mating of the first and second connector housings.

With respect to further claims, it is alleged the tapered surfaces are provided on one of the first and second housings. It is further alleged that Fukuda shows the other connector housing 3 has

an inner housing 17 formed with a tapered surface 3b, where the tapered surface of the inner housing is engaged in a surface-contact state with the tapered surface 2b of the one connector housing 2; that Fukuda shows the other connector housing has an inner housing formed with a looseness prohibiting protrusion 3a, where the tapered surface of the one connector housing abuts against the looseness prohibiting protrusion on mating the first and second connector housings, the looseness prohibiting protrusion having a tapered surface engaged with the tapered surface of the one connector housing to define a surface-contact state; that Fukuda discloses the inner housing is movable in the connector mating direction and is urged toward the one connector housing by a resilient member 39; and that Fukuda discloses the resilient member is a waterproof packing attached in the other connector housing.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Office Action has mischaracterized the teachings of Fukuda. In the statements on page 2 of the Office Action, (2b) and (3b) are referred to as engaging surfaces. The surface (3b), referred to in the sketch on page 3 of the Office Action, is on an end of the packing (39) that provides a seal in the male housing (3) and is not integrally formed on the housing as required in the present invention. Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 3 to emphasize this distinction. Also, while there may be some contact between identified tapered surfaces (2b) and (3b) in assembly of the connector, these surfaces do not engage with each other on "complete" mating of the two housings. As shown clearly in FIG. 16 of Fukuda, there are no mating tapered surfaces (2b) and (3b) when the housings are completely coupled with each other, as is required in the present invention. Applicants have amended Claims 1 and 3 to further provide that the tapered

surface, or tapered surfaces engage on "complete" mating of the housings.

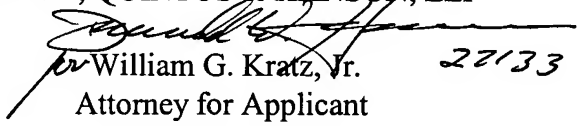
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Claims 1-9, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the applicants undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

In the event that this paper is not timely filed, the applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

KRATZ, QUINTOS & HANSON, LLP



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